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SUBJECT: GOC PLANS FOR WHO POLIO CONSULTATION

REF: STATE 20845

¶1. (U) ESTH discussed WHO DG Chan's upcoming high-level consultation on polio eradication with GOC officials from Health Canada and Foreign Affairs Canada and provided a non-paper drawn from reftel. Our interlocutors were well aware of Dr. Chan's initiative but were still deciding who would represent Canada in Geneva and were thus grateful to learn who planned to lead the U.S. delegation. They have since advised that Canada will be represented at the consultation by Geneva mission CIDA counselor Peter Oldham and CIDA senior health advisor Garry Aslanyan.

¶2. (SBU) Canadian officials were likewise aware of the funding gap facing the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 2007-08. They noted the importance Canada attaches to eradicating polio and stressed that Prime Minister Harper was fully supportive and considered the GPEI a priority. At the meeting, the delegation will reinforce continuing strong Canadian support for polio eradication efforts. Canada contributed C\$45 million to polio eradication in 2006-07, and was contributing an additional C\$5 million for polio eradication in Afghanistan. Our contacts said Canada had made no decisions about additional contributions to meet the funding gap, but noted active development assistance programs in the regions where polio seemed to be making a comeback. Any immediate additional support would be focused on efforts at the country level in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria. (Canada does not have a donor relationship with India, at the latter's request.)

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